

The Czar's Spy

(Continued from Seventh Page.)

court must suffer for her father's avarice and evil-doing."

"Yes," cried Jack anxiously. "That's right, Olinto. The police must know nothing. The reprisals we must make ourselves. But who was it who shot me in Suffolk Street?"

"The same man, Martin Woodroffe."

"Then the assassin is back from Russia?"

"He followed closely behind the Signor Commendatore. Markoff, a clever secret agent of Baron Oberg's, came with him."

Then for the first time I recollected that the man I had recognized in the Strand was a fellow I had seen lounging in the anteroom of the palace of the Governor General of Finland. The pair, fearing that I should reveal what I knew, were undoubtedly in London to take my life in secret. Now that Leithcourt was dead, Woodroffe had united forces with Oberg, and intended to silence me because they feared that Elma, besides escaping them, had also revealed her secret.

"I trust that the Signorina Leithcourt has explained the story of the yacht and its crew," Olinto remarked. "And has also shown you how I was implicated. You will therefore discern the reason why I have hitherto feared to give you any explanation."

"Yes," I said, "Miss Leithcourt has told me a great deal, but not everything. I cannot yet gather for what reason she and her father fled from Rannoch."

"Then I will tell you," said Muriel quickly. "My father suspected Woodroffe of being the assassin in Rannoch Wood, for he knew that he had broken away from the original compact, and had now allied himself with Oberg. Yet it was also my father's object to appear in fear of them, because he was only awaiting an opportunity to lay plans for poor Elma's rescue from Finland. Therefore one evening Woodroffe called, and my father encountered him in the avenue, and admitted him with his own latchkey by one of the side doors of the castle, afterwards taking him up to the study. He knew that he had come to try and make terms for Oberg, therefore he saw that he must fly at once to Newcastle, where the Iris was lying, get on board, and sail away."

"With some excuse he left him in the study, and then warned my mother and myself to prepare to leave. But while we were packing, it appeared that Chater, who had followed, was shown into the study by the butler, or rather he entered there himself, being well acquainted with the house. Thus the two men, now bitter enemies, met. A fierce quarrel must have ensued, and Chater was poisoned and concealed, Woodroffe, of course, believing he had killed him. My father entered the study again, and seeing only Woodroffe there, did not know what had occurred. Some words probably arose, when my father again turned and left. Then we fled to Carlisle and on to Newcastle, and next morning were on board the yacht out in the North Sea, afterwards landing at Rotterdam. Those," she added, "are briefly the facts, as my poor father related them to me."

"And what of poor Elma—and of her secret? When, I wonder, shall I see her?" I cried in despair.

"You will see her now, signore," answered Olinto. "A servant of the Princess Zudloff brought her to London this afternoon, and I have just conveyed her from the station. She is in the next room, in ignorance, however, that you are here."

And without another word I fled forward joyfully, and threw open the folding doors which separated me from my silent love.

Silent, yes! But she could, nevertheless, tell her story—surely the strangest that any woman has ever lived to tell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTAIN'S ELMA'S STORY.

Before me stood my love, a slim, tragic, rather wan figure in a heavy dark traveling coat and felt toque, her sweet

lips parted and a look of bewildered amazement upon her countenance as I burst in so suddenly upon her.

In silence I grasped her tiny black-gloved hand, and then, also in silence, raised it passionately to my eager lips. Her soft, dark eyes—those eyes that spoke although she was mute—met mine, and in them was a look that I had never seen there before—a look which as plainly as any words told me that my wild fevered passion was reciprocated.

She gazed beyond into the room where the others had assembled, and then looked at me inquiringly, whereupon I led her forward to where they were, and Muriel fell upon her and kissed her with tears streaming from her eyes.

"I prepared this surprise for you, Mr. Gregg," Muriel said, laughing through her tears of joy. "Olinto learnt that she was on her way to London, and I sent him to meet her. The Princess has managed magnificently, has she not?"

"Yes. Thank God, she is free!" I exclaimed. "But we must induce her to tell us everything."

Muriel was already helping my love out of her heavy Russian coat, a costly garment lined with sable, and then, after greeting Jack and Olinto, she was comfortably seated, I took some notepaper from the little writing table by the window and scribbled in pencil the words:

"I need not write how delighted I am that you are safe—that the Almighty has heard my prayers for you. Jack

(Continued on next Page)

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